



GREEN CORPS

The country's most respected training program for environmental organizers

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

“Thanks to your support, Green Corps continues its work to build a stronger and more enduring environmental movement.”

ORGANIZING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

If we want to live in a world with less plastic, less toxic pollution and less destructive climate change, we need more organizers.

It's as true today as it was in 1992, when a team of PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) leaders founded Green Corps, challenging college students and others to help save the planet by spending a year learning and practicing the craft of environmental organizing.

Since then, more than 400 aspiring organizers have answered the call, learning in classroom settings and through direct campaign experience how to leverage grassroots action to convince decision-makers to do the right thing for the environment.

At the center of the Green Corps logo, you'll find an acorn: a symbol of how a small seed can grow into something strong and enduring. Thanks to your support, Green Corps continues its work to build a stronger and more enduring environmental movement.



Doug Phelps

Chair, Green Corps Board

LETTER TO OUR MEMBERS



2023 proved to be another eventful year at Green Corps and across the environmental movement. We saw progress as additional state legislatures introduced bills and committed to using 100% clean electricity and the Biden administration proclaimed new national monuments in Nevada and Texas, and so much more.

At Green Corps, the Classes of 2023 and 2024 launched their careers with campaigns to protect critical ocean ecosystems, save pollinator populations from the overuse of toxic pesticides, and protect federal investments in clean energy, among other efforts. The Class of 2023 has since continued their organizing careers working to reduce waste in the fashion industry, protect threatened gray wolf populations, and continue to educate communities on ways they can act on climate change.

Our team showed up every day to do the challenging yet rewarding work required to protect our planet, and recruited thousands of people to act with them, often for the very first time. The value of organizing for environmental progress remains constant as we build the public support needed to create immediate policy gains while changing hearts and minds for the long-term, too. As always, thank you for your support, which makes our work possible.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Renee Wellman".

Renee Wellman
Executive Director

Green Corps Class of 2024



YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

2023 will be a year for the books. More often than not, the work of an organizer is behind the scenes and may only pay off in concrete action or tangible policy change after years of hard work. This year, our organizers provided field support to environmental campaigns, often building on the work of many other organizers and advocates, that resulted in the passage of concrete policies to protect our planet.

In Oregon, Green Corps partnered with OSPIRG Students and raised visibility in and around Eugene for a statewide ban on polystyrene foam products, including takeout containers, packing peanuts and coolers. After our organizers collected thousands of petitions and mobilized citizens to call their state legislators, Gov. Tina Kotek signed bills to do this in early May.

In Colorado, we worked to protect bees and other pollinators. We built public support to reduce the sale and use of neonicotinoids, a harmful class of pesticides, in key communities across Colorado. Green Corps Organizer

Natalie Woodland mobilized more than 149 small businesses and beekeepers in support of the campaign and hosted three different student lobby days at the state capitol. The corresponding bill passed the state Legislature and Gov. Jared Polis signed it in May 2023.

After multiple teams of Green Corps organizers worked on this effort between 2020 and 2022, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is going to conduct a study for how to best reconnect fragmented wildlife habitat. Green Corps organizers recruited more than 180 recreation businesses, elected officials and environmental groups to support this first step toward increasing the resiliency of Pennsylvania's wildlife.

Good news also came in the form of Chubb Insurance committing to not underwrite oil and gas extraction projects in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. As background, the Refuge is internationally known for its beauty and ecological importance, including the 45 resident species of land and marine mammals.





Its Porcupine caribou herd is one of the largest caribou herds in North America and is a critical part of the region's fragile ecosystem and the culture and sustenance of the Gwich'in people. For decades, there have been attempts to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Drilling would be devastating as heavy equipment would scar the fragile tundra; pipelines would disrupt caribou calving grounds; and the burning of additional fossil fuels would further destabilize the climate in a place that is already experiencing above average temperature change in recent years. Despite decades of campaign work to instate permanent protections, the Refuge's 1.5-million-acre coastal plain remains vulnerable to fossil fuel development.

Fortunately, fossil fuel development requires significant money and resources, and more than two dozen banks have issued policies against financing drilling in the Arctic Refuge. Fourteen international insurers have committed to not doing business with oil and gas companies in the Arctic Refuge. However, as of fall 2022, three of the U.S.'s largest insurers—Chubb, The Hartford and Travelers Insurance—had not made this commitment.

Heading into 2023, The Arctic Refuge Defense Campaign brought on a team of Green Corps organizers to build public support in the backyards of these companies' headquarters. Our team mobilized thousands of Connecticut and New Jersey residents to sign petitions, take photo petitions, place calls to company headquarters, and more. During the fall campaign, the team generated eight media hits, signed on 87 local businesses and organizations to support letters, and delivered more than 100,000 petition signatures to corporate headquarters in the final weeks of the effort. Chubb made their announcement in line with the asks of the campaign in early 2023. The Biden administration took the additional step of canceling seven gas and oil leases in the Refuge in September 2023.

These are just a few of the victories our team participated in this year, with many more at the hands of our alumni. There were countless other highlights in the form of media coverage earned, volunteer leaders trained, and educational events designed to engage local communities.



POWER FROM THE GRASSROOTS

(Page 3 left) In fall 2023, Green Corps organizers recruited New Jersey businesses to call on state legislators to support a 100% clean electricity bill.

(Page 3 right) Sam Cowles spoke to Seattle media about the harms of industrial fish farming to ocean ecosystems.

(Left) At the end of August training, organizers put their new skills to the test working on CoPIRG's Clean Air Colorado Campaign.



Organizer Jadyn Kuah and volunteers in Massachusetts hosted a table to collect petitions and photo petitions in support of protecting Cashes Ledge.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: PROTECTING A CRITICAL OCEAN HABITAT

Green Corps organizers are continuing our work to protect Cashes Ledge. Located 90 miles east of Boston in the Gulf of Maine, Cashes Ledge is home to the healthiest and deepest kelp forest in New England and has one of the last significant populations of North Atlantic cod. It's a wintering ground for puffins and a favorite spot for marine mammals. This is part of a larger effort to better protect critical ocean habitats, after ocean conservation has been a lesser priority of the conservation movement for many years. While many Americans have a deep affection for our oceans, few can name the amazing habitats that exist off our coasts, including Cashes Ledge.

In this campaign with MASSPIRG Students and Environment America, our organizers are calling on President Biden to follow through on his commitment to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030. Marine protected areas are similar to national parks and wildlife refuges on land in that human activities are minimized. An established marine protected area can provide whales, fish and the whole ecosystem an opportunity to live and

adapt without the continuous pressure of fishing, offshore drilling and seismic testing.

In 2023, organizers generated more than 6,500 petition signatures, handwritten letters and photo petitions, and three media hits. The team also organized district meetings with three members of Congress—U.S. Reps. Katherine Clark and Ayanna Pressley and Sen. Ed Markey—to call on them to ask President Biden to protect Cashes Ledge. In order to convince local members of Congress to support the protection of Cashes Ledge, they'll need to see additional widespread public support to overcome opposition from the fishing industry. Building support across Massachusetts and into Rhode Island and New Hampshire, they've prioritized building a pro-ocean coalition of local businesses and asking university student organizations and local university professors to sign letters of support. Time will tell if Cashes Ledge can become the next marine protected area, but we will continue to advocate and demonstrate that clear public support exists among young people and Massachusetts' coastal communities.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: COLORADO BECOMES 9TH STATE TO SAVE THE BEES

Starting in the fall of 2022, Green Corps partnered with Environment Colorado to save the bees. In short, pollinators are critical to life on Earth. A U.N. report found that almost 90% of wild plants and 75% of all food crops need animal pollinators to some extent. Bees are dying at alarming rates due to habitat loss, climate change, and the overuse of toxic pesticides, including a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids. One of the easiest ways to save the bees is to stop the consumer sale of neonicotinoids which inhibit bees' ability to find food.

Green Corps Organizer Natalie Woodland recruited more than 1,200 Coloradans to add their names to a petition calling on state legislators to stop the sale of neonicotinoids to the general public. Many more participated in campaign actions at the Denver Botanic Gardens, concerts and a "Trick or Seeding" event in Boulder in October. This Halloween-themed event featured University of Colorado

students distributing native wildflower seeds to Boulder residents while asking them to sign the campaign petition. One hundred forty-one businesses, farms, beekeepers and health professionals also voiced their support for the campaign, and other supporters wrote letters to the editor in Denver, Boulder and Glenwood Springs newspapers.

After building public support, the team hosted a press conference outside of the Colorado State Capitol before volunteers went inside to deliver petition signatures and coalition letters to elected officials ahead of the 2023 legislative session. Natalie earned coverage on NPR and local television stations in February. The bill in question was passed by the Colorado state legislature and subsequently signed by the governor late last spring.



Natalie Woodland hosts a press conference in Aurora, Colorado, in February 2023 releasing new findings about the health of local bee populations.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: GREEN CORPS ALUMNI PUT THEIR SKILLS TO WORK



VICTORIA HIGGINS, GC'19 CHESAPEAKE CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Victoria Higgins is the Virginia Director for Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) and its sister political arm, CCAN Action Fund. CCAN is the first grassroots, nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to fighting global warming in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Victoria mobilizes people to advocate for state policy solutions that allow the state to achieve a zero-carbon economy by 2040. Currently, her work in Virginia is focused on defending existing climate policy and fighting numerous pipeline and methane gas generation projects. Victoria's career began with Green Corps in 2018, which brought her to the Virginia area. After Green Corps, she worked at the Virginia Conservation Network coordinating with coalition partners and mobilizing their membership for environmental solutions.



JOSH SWIFT, GC'20 OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE, CANADA

After graduating from the University of Western Ontario, Josh Swift joined the Green Corps class of 2020, working on three different campaigns to advance state and federal climate legislation. After Green Corps, Josh moved back to Ottawa to work with GreenPAC, Canada's only nonpartisan nonprofit working to build leadership and political action on the environment. Josh now works as a senior policy advisor to Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, a prominent lifelong climate activist. In his role, Josh uses his campaign skills to map out strategies, identify tactics, and build coalitions to advance Canada's ambitious emissions reduction and nature protection goals.



JOSH BUSWELL-CHARKOW, GC'02 CALIFORNIA SOLAR & STORAGE ASSOCIATION

After graduating from Green Corps in 2003, Josh worked with the California Wilderness Coalition and Forest Ethics before returning to Green Corps, ultimately serving as the executive director from 2012 to 2017. Josh is now the deputy director of the California Solar & Storage Association (CALSSA), California's largest trade association of solar businesses. He organizes most events, ranging from lobby days to fundraisers to other political events and demonstrations. He helps CALSSA's member businesses navigate and advocate for better battery incentives, evolving state policies and federal investment tax credit opportunities. Josh says, "Every single day in my job, whether I'm raising money, recruiting someone to an event, talking to the press or mapping out a campaign, I'm using skills I was first taught in Green Corps 20 years ago."

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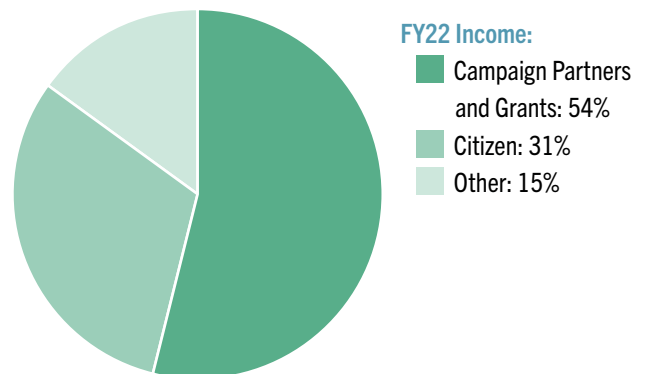
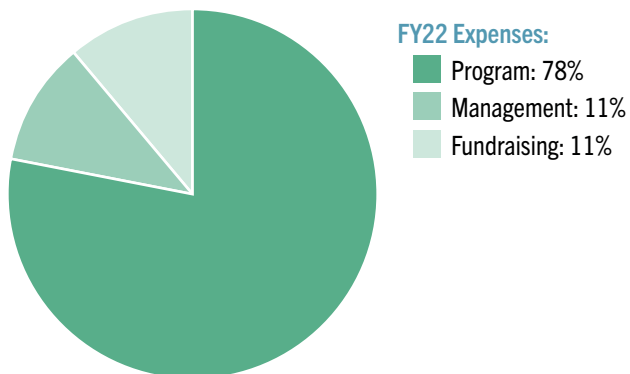
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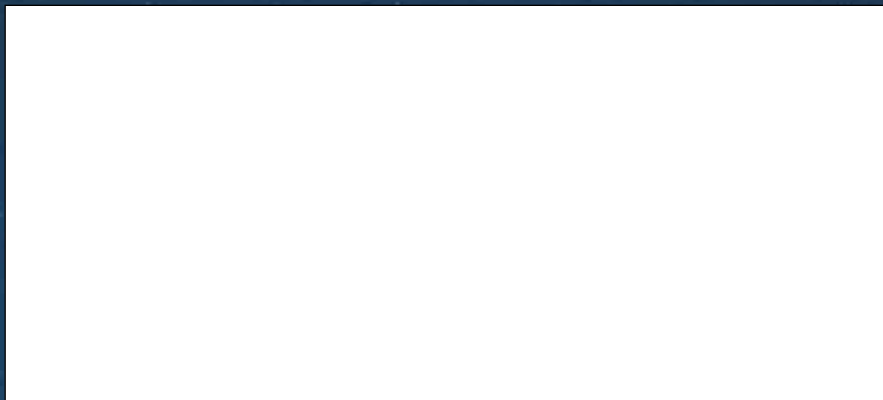
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